



February 14, 2014

Good Evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Naomi Mitchell. I have been a licensed family child care provider in Hartford for 19 years. I care for five children right now, and they all receive a Care 4 Kids subsidy. I am here to testify in support of Governor Malloy's increases in the Care 4 Kids rates. You have no idea what a struggle it has been for parents and for me too, without any changes in those rates for 12 long years.

What I love best about my job is the fact that I care for children who live right in my neighborhood. Parents and children come to me using strollers and buses. I know first-hand that they can't pay much more than what the Care 4 Kids program says they should pay, so I haven't charged them much more than that over the past few years. This has meant a considerable cut in pay for me, but I love my job and feel good about helping these great parents get ahead.

I give these kids a lot of love and attention, but I also act like a social worker for the mothers and fathers who don't always understand the mound of paperwork that is required to get the Care 4 Kids subsidy. They work hard, get up at 4am, drop children off as early as 5:30 and then take two more buses to get their job at 6am. Centers don't open that early! My job is as much taking care of them as it is taking care of their children.

Not all parents fit the center-based child care mold. I appreciate that the Governor took the time to consider that my work with children is just as important as the work that goes on in centers. I am also glad that the Union is here to help us get that point across. I can make a call to you once in a while, but the Union has given us a collective voice to let you know that we exist and that we matter.

Please support the raise in rates for Care 4 Kids and please make sure that family child care stays a part of the early care and system.

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